

CITY OF WELLS.



URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY.

Medical Officer's Report for 1902.

To the Urban Sanitary Authority of the City of Wells.

5TH FEBRUARY, 1903.

Area of District
720 Acres.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my ANNUAL REPORT for the year 1902.

Population. The Population at the last Census was returned as 4849, but it is generally believed to be somewhat more.

Geology. The geological formation of the district consists of Lias and Limestone towards the hills, Red Marl and Gravel in other parts.

Occupation. The great majority of the Inhabitants are engaged in various Trades, some are agricultural labourers, whilst a considerable number (including many women and girls) earn their living by working at Paper Manufacturing Works outside the City. A Brush and Chair Factory, and some Engineering Works also employ numerous hands.

Water Supply. The Town Council have taken over the Water Company, and have given a continuous supply under high pressure, although as yet no increased storage has been provided. Several analyses have shown the water to be of great purity, and free from contamination of any kind.

Sewerage. The City is Sewered, and provided with numerous Automatic Flushing Tanks; the Sewers are ventilated by shafts at various points, and no complaints have been made for a considerable period concerning them. The street ejects are flushed periodically, and disinfectants poured down afterwards.

Scavenging. Scavenging is systematically carried out by the Council's servants, house refuse being removed every morning in covered carts to a field adjacent to the Sewage Works.

Sewage Disposal. The New Septic Tanks have been in operation for several months. A difficulty of some magnitude has arisen in consequence of an abnormal quantity of water finding its way into the Sewers, and seriously interfering with the efficient working of the filter beds, thus throwing the whole system out of gear. The Council have had the Sewers opened at various points and discovered considerable leakages from the Mill stream; the work of exploration is being energetically proceeded with and every effort made to put matters right.

Disinfection.	<p>The Sanitary Inspector diligently looks after the disinfection of all rooms which have been occupied by persons suffering from infectious disease, Formic Aldehyde being chiefly used for the purpose. Bottles of Carbolic Acid are supplied to the poorer classes when necessary, and a strong coloured solution of Mercury for soaking clothes, scrubbing floors, &c., is also given them by the Inspector, with special instructions regarding care in its use. The Steam Disinfector continues to work satisfactorily.</p>
Houses of the Working Classes.	<p>The older small Houses in the occupation of the working classes are in a far better sanitary condition than they used to be, whilst the modern cottages are extremely good, and nearly all have good gardens. Houses of a better class are being built in considerable numbers where land is available.</p>
Inspection of District.	<p>I have visited all the Slaughter Houses, Bakeries and Milk Shops, and found very little to complain of, although of course a Public Slaughter House would be most desirable in every way.</p> <p>Not only does the Inspector visit these various places frequently and examine them thoroughly so as to ensure their being kept clean, but he has recently made inspections of the Factories, Workshops, &c., in accordance with the requirements of the New Factory and Workshop Act, and has failed to find unhealthy conditions prevailing. A report of his year's work is appended.</p>
Bye-laws.	<p>Bye-laws are in force.</p>
Common Lodging Houses.	<p>There are two common Lodging Houses in the City, which are frequently visited by the Inspector (an ex-Sergeant of Police), who reports favourably as to their management and cleanliness.</p>
Notification.	<p>Notification has been in force since 1890, and Measles has since been made a notifiable disease, as has Chicken Pox for a limited period.</p>
Isolation Hospital.	<p>Only one case has been sent into the Isolation Hospital during the year, an adult suffering from Scarlet Fever.</p>
Ambulance.	<p>A Horse Ambulance is kept on the Hospital premises.</p>
Prevalence of Disease.	<p>Three cases of Diphtheria, four of Erysipelas, two of Scarlet Fever, and one of Typhoid Fever have been notified during the year. The latter case had its origin in a leakage from the soil pipe of a w.c. in an adjoining house; it had been imbedded in the wall separating the houses, and a large quantity of liquid sewage had found its way through and completely saturated the subsoil under the floor of the bedroom in which the patient slept although its presence had not been suspected.</p> <p>Measles were epidemic late in the year, 264 cases having been notified. Exclusion of all children from school from infected houses having failed to check the spread of the disease, I advised closure of the Public Elementary Schools, which had a most beneficial effect, the notifications being rapidly reduced after the first week. Five children died from resulting lung disease.</p>
Birth and Death Averages.	<p>The Birth of 113 Infants registered yields a Birth Rate of 23·30 per 1000 living.</p> <p>Sixty-four residents died during the year, the Death Rate being 13·19 per 1000 living.</p> <p>Ten infants died under one year of age, the Infant Mortality being 88·49 per 1000 births.</p> <p>No death was registered from any Zymotic disease other than measles, which gave a Zymotic Rate of 1·03 per 1000.</p>

Six deaths from Cancer were registered in persons advanced in life, two died from Phthisis, and eight from other diseases of the Respiratory organs, whilst 13 died from Heart Disease, the majority being quite old people.

Twenty-three deaths occurred in the Workhouse, nine of whom belonged to the district and fourteen to other parishes in the union.

One inquest was held during the year.

Appended to this report are the Statistical Tables required by the Local Government Board.

I am gentlemen, yours faithfully,

R. PURNELL,

Medical Officer of Health.

INSPECTOR of NUISANCES' SUMMARY of WORK for the Year ending Dec. 31st, 1902.

Premises visited on complaint or information	...	...	...	521
Letters and written Notices served	...	...	...	31
Notices served <i>re</i> Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	105
Ordinary Visits to Slaughter Houses	...	...	...	572
Notices served <i>re</i> Lime Washing of Slaughter Houses	...	...	...	44
Visits of Inspection to Bakehouses	...	...	...	48
Flushing Apparatus added to Closets	...	...	...	3

NUISANCES REMOVED—

Choked or defective Closets put into proper condition	...	15
Defective Drains opened, cleansed, and properly relaid	...	25
Cases of overcrowding	... ..	5
Keeping Pigs contrary to Bye-laws	... ..	3
Defective shooting to eaves	... ..	4
Accumulations of Ashes, Manure or Refuse	... ..	17
Smoke Nuisances, Bad Smells, &c.	... ..	19

I have at regular intervals visited all the Dairies, Milk Shops and Public Stable Yards in the City, and found them kept in a very satisfactory condition.

Wm. H. JENKINS,

January 12th, 1903.

Inspector of Nuisances.

